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State Plan for Professional Development 1995-1996

JUNE, 1995

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023 • (617) 388-3300

Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner

July, 1995

Dear Colleagues:

The Department of Education is pleased to issue its 1995-1996 State Plan for Professional Development in accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1993. This State Plan offers bold, new direction for professional development in the state and provides educators in school districts and in other settings with clear priorities regarding the professional development activity that will advance education reform and strengthen teaching and learning in schools.

The State Plan is linked to Board and Department of Education goals as described in the *Five Year Master Plan.* It is mission driven and outcomes based. It builds on existing professional development capacity across the state and creates opportunities for dynamic new approaches. The Plan and its activities can be used as a resource for districts as they meet the professional growth needs of their staff.

We invite you to join us as partners in this plan. We hope that the plan will inform your professional development activity and that you will work with us to realize the potential of its activities. Working together, we can make Massachusetts a leader in professional development that makes a difference in learning and teaching for students.

Sincerely,

Robert V. Antonucci

Robert V. Antonucci
Commissioner of Education
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

State Plan for Professional Development 1995-1996

Robert V. Antonucci, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Education

JUNE, 1995

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Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents
Massachusetts Elementary School Principals Association
Massachusetts Federation of Teachers
Massachusetts Middle Level School Administrators Association
Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators Association
Massachusetts Teachers Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 **Executive Summary**

6 **The Context of Education Reform**

6 The National Perspective

6 Activity in the States

6 Challenging Curriculum Standards

6 Standards for Teachers, Administrators and Other Educators

7 Professional Development in Massachusetts

7 A Comprehensive, Statewide System

8 **A Vision of Professional Development: An Essential Link to Higher Student Achievement**

8 The Knowledge Base on Professional Development

9 Ensuring a Cohesive Strategy for Professional Development

11 **Goals and Objectives For Professional Development: 1995-1996**

11 Goals

11 Priorities

13 Objectives, Activities, and Related Strategies for Districts, Schools, and Educators

13 **1.0** Provide High Quality Professional Development Programs that are Aligned with the Priorities of the Board of Education's Five Year Master Plan

16 **2.0** Create a Statewide Network for the Professional Development of Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators

18 **3.0** Establish Standards for Professional Development Programs

19 **4.0** Expand District Capacity to Deliver High Quality, Comprehensive Professional Development Programs

21 **5.0** Support the Reform of Education Preparation Programs and the Performance Assessment of Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators

24 **6.0** Maintain and Enhance Professional Development Provider and Recertification Systems

25 **7.0** Sponsor Research on Effective Professional Development Programs

26 **8.0** Disseminate Exemplary State Practices in Professional Development

27 **Evaluation of the State Plan For Professional Development**

28 **Appendices**

28 **A.** Characteristics of High Quality Professional Development

29 **B.** Professional Development Bibliography

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The success of education reform in Massachusetts depends on the existence of high quality professional development experiences for teachers, administrators, and others in schools. Key to improving student learning are the skills, knowledge, and understandings that teachers, administrators, and others bring to classrooms and school districts. It is essential that the state coordinate and stimulate local, regional, and statewide professional development programs that are focused on curriculum reform, new approaches to educational leadership, and expanding the use of technologies for educational improvement.

In the State Plan for Professional Development, the Massachusetts Department of Education sets forth the following professional development goals, priorities, and objectives for improving student performance:

Goals for Professional Development

- Enable teachers and administrators to support all students in achieving the standards of the Common Core of Learning.
- Enhance teaching, learning and educational leadership through sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development programs.
- Provide priorities, direction and resources for school districts and individual educators that support educational improvement in Massachusetts.

Priorities for Professional Development

- **Curriculum Frameworks** that describe...
  - content and learning standards for students
  - teaching, learning, and assessment practices
  - restructuring for schools to support learning-centered classrooms.
- **Educational Leadership** that results in improving teachers' and administrators' practice in schools.
- **Technology** that supports teaching, learning, and educational administration.

Objectives of the State Plan for Professional Development

- Provide High Quality Professional Development Programs that are Aligned with the Priorities of the Board of Education's *Five Year Master Plan*
- Create a Statewide Network for the Professional Development of Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators
- Establish Standards for Professional Development Programs
- Expand District Capacity to Deliver High Quality Comprehensive Professional Development Programs
- Support the Reform of Education Preparation Programs and the Performance Assessment of Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators
- Maintain and Enhance Professional Development Provider and Recertification Systems
- Sponsor Research on Effective Professional Development Programs
- Disseminate Exemplary State Practices in Professional Development

THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION REFORM

The National Perspective

Our country has been focused on the reform of its educational system for more than a decade. At the national level, efforts to establish national standards for student learning were launched following the 1989 education summit of President Bush and the nation's Governors. Since then, through federal and private funding, over a dozen national organizations have developed standards for learning in specific content areas. The National Center on Education and the Economy, in collaboration with the Learning Research and Development Center (New Standards Project) and the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, are working with states to create new content standards and associated authentic methods of student assessment. National legislation (e.g., Improving America's Schools Act, Goals 2000, Office of Educational Research and Improvement) has been approved which provides encouragement and financial support for states to develop and implement challenging content standards for their educational systems.

Activity in the States

Following the publication of numerous reports in the 1980s, individual states launched efforts to establish more rigorous graduation requirements, redesign student testing programs, strengthen teacher preparation requirements, and create statewide teacher evaluation systems. These reforms resulted in a mixture of successes and failures with some schools and some districts benefiting from school reforms while others found them less effective. Current research is focusing on the conditions under which new programs are implemented as well as the content and focus of these programs.

Challenging Curriculum Standards

In connection with the current education reform initiatives, states are introducing a new model for school reform that includes establishing challenging curriculum standards for students and expanding the site-based autonomy with which educators and community members can create challenging learning environments for students. Throughout the country, more systemic approaches to school improvement are being implemented in order to coordinate strategies for educational improvement.

Paralleling the national focus for education reform, states have created common cores of learning and associated curriculum frameworks. Many states are poised to introduce their new curriculum frameworks and performance-based student assessments. The design and implementation of comprehensive professional development programs will enable educators to maximize the potential of curriculum frameworks, apply new student assessment procedures, and create positive environments for teaching and administering in schools. These sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development programs are essential to the creation of quality schools in Massachusetts and across the country.

Standards for Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators

As states create higher standards for learning, the nation is looking more closely at raising the standards for teachers and administrators in schools. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the new National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, and the Council of Chief State School Officers' Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium are creating enhanced systems for teacher preparation, teacher licensing, national certification, and professional development. Most recently, NCATE announced plans to connect performance-based standards for teachers with student standards. NCATE will use these standards to influence teacher education accreditation and licensing procedures. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration and the Council of Chief State School Officers' Interstate Principals' Licensure Consortium are similarly involved in establishing standards for what administrators need to know and be able to do in order to provide excellent leadership for schools.

These new standards and credentialling systems are also guiding the evaluation of educators through performance-based standards for teachers and administrators. The implications for professional development are enormous. It will take sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development programs for elementary and secondary teachers and administrators, and the college and university faculty who prepare them, to ensure that public schools are preparing all students to meet the standards that have been established for them.

Professional Development in Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act strongly promotes world class standards for education. Student, teacher, administrator, and other educator preparation program standards and assessments are moving through the development and approval phases. The Common Core of Learning has been approved. Curriculum Frameworks are being established. Performance-based standards for teachers and administrators and accompanying Principles of Effective Teaching and Effective Educational Leadership have been developed by educator task forces for presentation to the Board of Education in late Summer. Performance-based assessments for students, teachers, administrators, schools, and educator preparation programs are being crafted. A close match exists between educational reform initiatives in Massachusetts and the activity that is taking place at the national level.

Professional development in this state did not originate with the Education Reform Act of 1993. Many Massachusetts schools and school districts have long been modeling practices which reflect the most advanced concepts of school improvement and the best research and practice on professional development for teachers and administrators. The State Plan for Professional Development builds on these existing, promising practices to increase the likelihood that school reform efforts will take firm root in the culture of schools in our state.

A Comprehensive, Statewide System

An essential, comprehensive statewide system of professional development is being designed and implemented in Massachusetts. This system applies to all educators involved in Pre-K, K-12, and Adult Basic Education programs. Individual Professional Development Plans, School Improvement Plans that include a school's professional development strategy, and District Professional Development Plans infuse the entire educational system with the importance of lifelong professional development for teachers and administrators. A Professional Development Provider system is being nurtured to enhance opportunities for teachers and administrators to engage in high quality professional development programs. A recertification system for educators provides incentives for all teachers and administrators to engage in professional development activity which is linked to efforts to improve learning for all students in their district. The Massachusetts Department of Education provides a range of professional development programs for teachers, administrators, school councils, school committees, Department staff, and the public. The Department is in the process of planning coordinated professional development programs that support systemic implementation of education reform.

Among professional associations and organizations, regional collaboratives, institutions of higher education, private professional development providers, and others, there is a heightened awareness that a state-of-the-art statewide system of professional development is a prerequisite to the creation of a world class education system. These stakeholders are designing sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development programs that strengthen the capacity of their constituencies to contribute to educational improvement.

As noted by Commissioner Robert V. Antonucci and Chair of the Board of Education, Martin S. Kaplan, "The real work of education reform is being done every day in classrooms across the Commonwealth by the thousands of teachers, school administrators, and others who are working to create

schools of the future." Researchers are learning about the best practices in professional development by analyzing professional development programs in schools and school districts. It is here that effective professional development programs are directly linked to improved student performance. It is within their schools that Massachusetts educators will make the improvements in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership that will directly influence the quality of education for all students.

A VISION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: AN ESSENTIAL LINK TO HIGHER STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The Knowledge Base of Professional Development

Does professional development make a difference in student learning? Over the last decade, professional development has moved from determining if educators "liked" the training to assessing the "impact" of training on educators' knowledge base, documenting changes in teachers' and administrators' practices, and ultimately demonstrating differences in student learning. Thomas Good, Bruce Joyce, Beverly Showers, Robert Slavin, Jane Stallings and other researchers on professional development have conducted convincing studies which link professional development to higher student achievement. Professional development programs ranging from teacher/administrator study groups to intensive on site training have helped students improve attendance, grades, test scores, and discipline in projects throughout the country. The design and implementation strategies for professional development programs that research demonstrates have the strongest likelihood of producing gains in student learning are at the core of the Massachusetts vision for effective professional development. *(See Appendix A)*

Drawing on the National Staff Development Council and others, the Massachusetts Department of Education envisions excellence that requires three key elements:

❶ CONTEXT

The context refers to the organization or system in which the professional development will be implemented. It is a measure of the support that the organization provides for educators' professional development activity and the ways in which the school or district culture reinforce and facilitate educators' learning.

❷ PROCESS

The process is the "how" of professional development: how it will be implemented; the format it will take; the time that will be involved.

❸ CONTENT

The content is the "what" of professional development: what information and skills educators will acquire through the professional development activity.

An effective professional development program operates within a **context** in which there is a cooperative relationship between teachers and administrators who work hard to create positive learning experiences for students. The school is a center of inquiry in which time and resources are prudently devoted to implementing a shared vision for how professional development can make a difference for students. In this environment, teachers and administrators are committed to their own involvement in continuous improvement and to the learning that occurs for all staff at the school.

The **process** of professional development implies sustained, intensive, and high quality design features which participants have helped conceive. It is characterized by multiple strategies for professional growth that may include study groups, guided practice, mentoring, reflection, observation, practice, and assessment. It may occur on or off the school site, during the school day, or when school is not in session. Even more important than the initial training is consistent follow-up and support in the classroom for teachers and in the school building for administrators. Without continuous follow-up and support after the first year of a program, it is unlikely there will be positive effects on student learning. Formal data collection and evaluation, as the professional development program proceeds, can alert providers and participants about whether new ideas are being implemented and, more importantly, can signal whether an activity is having its intended effects on student outcomes.

The **content** of professional development needs to be carefully chosen and research-based. Educators should ask if the content selected is grounded in research that supports the likelihood that implementation will result in improved student learning. They may also ask if the new teaching and administrative practices will increase educators' ability to provide challenging, developmentally-appropriate learning experiences that are based on the desired skill and knowledge outcomes for all students.

When the context, process, and content of professional development programs are in congruence, improved student learning will be an outcome. This State Plan for Professional Development is driven by this understanding and belief. Each component of the State Plan builds on this knowledge of professional development in order to create a statewide environment for the design, implementation, and evaluation of exemplary programs of professional development.

Ensuring A Cohesive Strategy For Professional Development

From a strategy perspective, the question is how to maximize the productive mix of top-down pressure, incentives, and responsiveness on the one hand, and bottom-up initiatives, development, and accountability on the other.
To accomplish this mix it is necessary to:

- Articulate at the state level an overarching rationale and direction with reference to desired learning outcomes.
- Make local and regional capacity building a priority for schools, districts and regions.
- Invest from the state level in value-added strategies to support and feed into local development (such as funding exemplary programs, research, evaluation and dissemination).
- Work on defining roles and establishing partnerships and alliances across key constituencies (universities and schools, teacher unions, etc.).

Adapted from Fullan, *1994 ASCD Yearbook*, pp. 199-200.

The State Plan for Professional Development presents a one-year program that has been developed in the context of a multi-year effort. The Plan articulates "an overarching rationale and direction with reference to desired learning outcomes" by emphasizing as its goal the support of all students in achieving the Common Core of Learning. It links curriculum frameworks/instructional practices, assessment, approaches to restructuring schools, leadership, and technology

to higher levels of student learning. It creates for each of these programmatic objectives a range of high impact, powerful professional development programs.

It puts forth a set of activities to enable "local and regional capacity building [to] be a priority for schools, districts and regions." It builds on existing, promising professional development practices at all levels of the educational system and creates new vehicles that support and complement current activity.

Furthermore, the State Plan for Professional Development invests in "strategies to support local development (exemplary programs, research, evaluation and dissemination)." Financial incentives are proposed for teachers, administrators, school committees, school councils, districts, educational organizations, and others to create innovative local, regional, and statewide approaches to professional development. Opportunities are included for identifying and supporting the diffusion of successful practices. Research and evaluation activities will provide feedback on successes and decrease reliance on unsuccessful efforts. Professional development alliances, networks, and consortia will be encouraged and supported so that there is a maximum gain from existing professional resources.

As educators, we all have a responsibility to become actively engaged in sustained, intensive, and high-quality lifelong professional development programs. We invite all readers of the State Plan for Professional Development to find ways that the Plan can support professional growth in your community and for all of us across the state.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: 1995-1996

GOALS

The goals of the Massachusetts State Plan for Professional Development are to improve student performance by:

- Enabling teachers and administrators to support all students in achieving the standards of the Common Core of Learning
- Enhancing teaching, learning and educational leadership through sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development programs
- Providing priorities, direction and resources for school districts and individual educators that support educational improvement in Massachusetts.

These goals are presented in the context of the first year of a multi-year effort for professional development.

PRIORITIES

The Department of Education has established the following priorities that will direct its Professional Development Activity for the 1995-1996 school year. These priorities reflect the Department's implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1993 and are aligned with the Board of Education's *Five Year Master Plan*, approved on March 1, 1995. These priorities represent year one goals of a five-year plan.

• Curriculum Frameworks

The Department is developing challenging Curriculum Frameworks in seven important academic areas. The Frameworks are based on the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning which was adopted by the Board of Education in 1994.

The Curriculum Frameworks describe:

- **Content and learning standards** for students
- **Teaching, learning and assessment practices** that can be used in each content area and that reflect research-based instructional approaches that result in higher order thinking skills for students
- **Approaches to restructuring schools** to support learning-centered classrooms.

• Educational Leadership

In order to accomplish the Commonwealth's goals for students' learning, it will be critical to address the professional development needs of teachers, school administrators, and others who work in and with schools. It will also be essential to develop high standards for educators' performance and to define the quality standards for effective professional development programs that result in improving teachers' and administrators' practice in schools.

• Technology

Educational technology is integrated into the approaches recommended by the Curriculum Frameworks and can be used to support the professional development activity of educators. The state has a role to play in assisting school districts to assess their technology needs and understand a range of approaches to linking technology with teaching, learning, and educational management.

Aligning State, District, and Individual Educators' Priorities

The vision of the Department of Education is to move toward alignment of state, district, and individual educators' priorities during the five year context of this Plan. In this first year of the plan, there is some coherence among the education reform priorities of the Department, school districts and schools, and educators as indicated in Figure A. With enhanced professional development activity and agreement among educators regarding the professional performance standards to which all educators will be held, these priorities will come into greater harmony, as indicated in Figure B. This State Plan offers a vision of where the state should be headed, the resources that will facilitate the journey, landmarks for knowing how we are doing en route, and an evaluation of how well we have done and what we have yet to accomplish in subsequent years.

FIGURE A

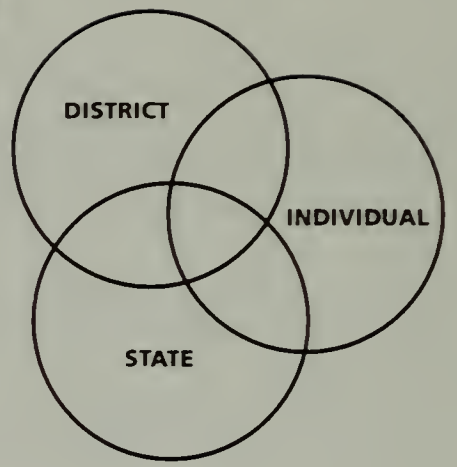
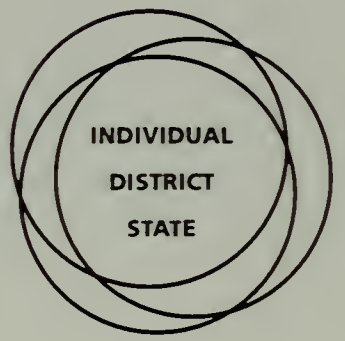


FIGURE B



OBJECTIVE 1.0 – Provide High Quality Professional Development Programs that are Aligned with the Priorities of the Board of Education's *Five Year Master Plan*

The Massachusetts Department of Education will create, implement, and coordinate focused professional development programs that support the priorities of the Board of Education and school districts. The Department will maximize opportunities to connect other ongoing professional development programs to these priorities or encourage the refocusing of these programs so that they support the implementation of education reform. School districts will be encouraged to take advantage of these professional development resources as they implement their own visions for professional development. These programs will be targeted toward educators in public schools, school committee members, school council members, parents, and community partners. Special attention will be given to educators who work with linguistic minorities, students with disabilities, or students who are otherwise at risk of not reaching their potential. An assessment of the effectiveness of professional development activity at the state and district levels will help to shape planning for subsequent years.

Rationale

The Department must maximize its resources and access those of others to target the priority areas that support the effective implementation of the Education Reform Act. Integrated models of professional development at the state, regional, and local levels are needed to demonstrate the cost effectiveness and impact of linking the elements of education reform to the professional development activity of teachers, administrators, and others in schools.

Activities for the Department

1.1 Develop a system for coordinating the Department's professional development services with input from both internal and external constituencies to ensure that all programs provided and supported by the Department represent the best research and practice in professional development.

1.2 Implement integrated Institutes for professional development that will engage teams of administrators, school committee members, teachers, school council co-chairs, parents, and community partners from school districts in (a) understanding the philosophy and approaches of the new Curriculum Frameworks and (b) understanding and implementing a district change model that prepares schools and districts to implement education reform initiatives. These multi-year Institutes, that will begin in the Summer, 1995, will engage

Continued next page

Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Identify the guiding principles of the district's professional development activity, such as student learning goals, curriculum assessment goals, etc.
- Assess the degree to which current district activity is addressing Department of Education priorities.
- Incorporate Department of Education priorities into professional development planning, adding other priorities that address district needs.
- Develop an action plan to guide the district's Strategic Plan for Professional Development.

Continued next page

Activities

district teams in sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development activity. During the 1995-1996 school year, Department staff and selected consultants will conduct follow-up Institute activities.

1.3 Provide on-site coaching, technical assistance, and grants on aligning curriculum frameworks with district and school goals and improvement plans for district teams that participate in the Institutes.

1.4 Design and implement additional integrated training programs for teachers, administrators and other staff on the teaching, learning, and assessment approaches of the Curriculum Frameworks and on the connection between school reform and Curriculum Frameworks.

1.5 Create a multi-year professional development program for educators to enable them to implement innovative, classroom based student assessment approaches linked to the Curriculum Frameworks. Such approaches may include student portfolios, performance events, open-ended questions, and investigations.

1.6 Build on the Principals' Institutes with a multi-year leadership program for beginning and veteran superintendents, principals, special education administrators, and other administrators that expands the capacity of education leaders to implement systemic approaches to the Education Reform Act.

1.7 Develop and disseminate periodic videotapes and other materials for superintendents, principals, and others to use for engaging parents and the public in understanding and contributing to the goals and programs of education reform.

1.8 Support school-based change networks including: (a) Project Zero; (b) Coalition of Essential Schools; (c) Accelerated Schools; (d) Middle Grade Curriculum Project; (e) High School Restructuring Project; (f) School-to-Work; and (g) Massachusetts Transition Initiative. Provide opportunities to

Continued next page

Strategies

- Participate in Department of Education and other Providers' professional development and grant programs that address the needs and goals of the district.
- Draw on the resources of the Department and other providers to address the district's professional development needs and interest in "no-cost" options for recertification.
- Identify and share with the Department district-based professional development successes.

Activities

engage other schools in the program activities of each network and ensure alignment of networks with education reform priorities.

1.9 Provide district grants through Education Reform and federal funds to support sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development activity which focuses on the education reform priorities of the Board of Education and schools. Grant programs will require implementation of: (a) curriculum frameworks/instructional practices; (b) authentic assessment of students; (c) approaches to restructuring schools; (d) new approaches to educational leadership; and (e) technology integration.

1.10 Design and implement professional development technology programs for Mass Ed On-Line planning and coordination, local technology planning that is aligned with district goals, the statewide information network, satellite video broadcasts, and educational technology resource evaluation and procurement.

1.11 Seek to connect external professional development programs of colleges and universities, educational associations, and others to the priorities of the Department of Education and schools; if appropriate, encourage these programs to become refocused to support the implementation of the Education Reform Act.

OBJECTIVE 2.0 – Create a Statewide Network for the Professional Development of Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators

The Department will create an innovative, regional delivery system for professional development for teachers, administrators, and others involved with schools by drawing on existing efforts and spurring the design and implementation of new models. This innovative, regional delivery system will form a network of existing, emerging, and new quality programs that are focused on Department goals and priorities.

Rationale

School and district administrators are seeking quality regional professional development opportunities for staff that support district and school goals. Individual educators are asking for meaningful and challenging professional growth experiences that will strengthen their effectiveness as they work with students. To be effective, the Department of Education must work in partnership with others to ensure access and equity in professional development offerings across the state. The Department must build linkages with and among educators from schools, colleges and universities, educational associations and organizations, and others to identify, design, implement, and evaluate high quality local and regional professional development programs that can be measured by their impact on student learning.

Activities for the Department

2.1 Select and convene a broadly representative working group of educators and Department staff for the identification of criteria for innovative delivery approaches for the professional development of teachers, administrators, and others involved with schools. These criteria can be used for identifying and selecting regional innovation models for grant programs and for inclusion in technical assistance and networking opportunities.

2.2 Select and provide start-up funding for innovative pilot projects that build on existing programs, form new regional networks, and model new delivery approaches. Draw on a broad range of educational partners, including school districts, educational collaboratives, higher education, education associations and organizations, and others in the development of these projects.

2.3 Support dissemination and adaptation of exemplary models of regional professional development.

Continued next page

Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Survey staff regarding the nature of professional development programs that are desired.
- Support teachers and administrators who seek to collaborate with educators from neighboring districts on the design and implementation of professional development activities that address districts' education reform goals.
- Participate as a district site in the piloting of models of professional development activity.
- Identify potential partners with which the district might want to link for professional development planning and programming.
- Identify partners who can be resources to networks of districts on issues such as curriculum reform, authentic assessment, school restructuring, etc.
- Facilitate the participation, by teams of teachers and administrators, in regional professional growth programs in which the district is a partner.

Activities

2.4 Collaborate with regional network administrators/coordinators (2.2;2.3) to identify effective strategies that have resulted in significant learning for teachers and administrators.

2.5 Identify a network of resource people in each region who draw on effective strategies (2.4) to provide consultation to districts on developing their own exemplary models of professional development.

2.6 Provide technical assistance to districts seeking to form regional professional development collaboratives.

2.7 Develop evaluation measures for effective professional development delivery models.

OBJECTIVE 3.0 – Establish Standards for Professional Development Programs

The Department will involve state and national authorities on high quality professional development in establishing a set of measurable standards for professional development as well as a system for applying these standards to the approval of Professional Development Provider programs.

Rationale

Measurable standards for professional development programs will provide school districts and other professional development providers with an accountability mechanism to assess the quality of educators' professional development activity. These baseline state standards can be used by districts to design local standards that address the expectations in their school community.

Activities for the Department

3.1 Convene a working group of state and national experts on professional development; develop recommendations for the Board of Education on a set of measurable standards for professional development and on a system for applying these standards to the approval of Professional Development Provider programs.

3.2 Disseminate information on measurable standards for professional development and on a system for applying these standards to the approval of Professional Development Provider programs.

3.3 Field-test application of the measurable standards for professional development for approval of Professional Development Provider programs. Design a statewide system for applying measurable standards for professional development to the approval of Professional Development Provider programs.

3.4 Develop a system to evaluate the impact of professional development standards on educators' practice and on student learning.

Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Establish a district study group to review and discuss the state standards and recommend modifications for the district.
- Survey staff for their evaluation of the standards and their assessment of the impact on educators' practice.
- Suggest that school councils, parent groups, and others in the schools convene meetings of parents and the public to describe, discuss and provide input into standards for professional development activity in the district.

OBJECTIVE 4.0 – Expand District Capacity to Deliver High Quality, Comprehensive Professional Development Programs

The Department will provide leadership and support to districts to create and implement comprehensive school and district professional development plans which build the capacity of schools and districts to offer sustained, intensive, and high-quality professional development programs for teachers, administrators, school councils, parents, and others.

Rationale

The Education Reform Act requires the Department to provide "statewide assistance in the preparation and implementation of [district] professional development plans." It also directs teachers, administrators, schools, and districts to create their respective professional development plans. In addition, districts are responsible for providing no-cost options for educators as they implement their professional development plans.

Activities for the Department

4.1 Provide leadership as districts develop integrated professional development experiences for district staff through technical assistance on (a) the creation of individual, school, and district professional development plans; and (b) the design, implementation, and evaluation of sustained, intensive, and high quality professional development programs for teachers and administrators. Facilitate the development of training opportunities that are based on research, align school-based and district wide goals, coordinate the components of education reform, specify desired results, and integrate continuous assessment to determine the programs' effectiveness.

4.2 Use the Department's technical assistance and informational activities to encourage non-school district Professional Development Providers to align their services with Department and school district priorities and with the quality design, delivery, and evaluation approaches of good practice. Encourage Providers to contribute to district planning, as requested, and to modify the content and delivery of services based on continuous assessment of programs.

4.3 Develop a technical assistance guide for districts to support the development of their professional development programs. Assist districts in identifying and implementing effective professional development programs; provide sugges-

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Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Participate in state and regional informational and training activities that provide technical assistance and information on the development of individual, school, and district professional development plans.
- Draw on the information and resources compiled in the resource manual for district plans and in this State Plan.
- Provide training to district staff on the development of district, school, and individual improvement plans.
- Survey and analyze the scope of regional resources that can be tapped to support school and district planning.
- Link district planning to regional professional development partnerships and networks.
- Develop a professional development budget that supports district goals and plans.
- Engage broadly representative constituencies in the community in development of a plan.

Activities

tions regarding the implementation of the credentialling components of the Education Reform Act; suggest models for district professional development plans; make the guide available through print and electronic sources.

4.4 Collect, review, and analyze district professional development plans. Widely disseminate a report on the content and quality of the plans to school districts, the Department of Education, the Board of Education, the Executive Office of Education, and Professional Development Providers. This report will provide information on the nature and quality of professional development services and inform planning for subsequent professional development programs to ensure they are sustained, intensive, high quality, and focused upon the priorities of the Board and Department of Education and of schools and school districts.

OBJECTIVE 5.0 Support the Reform of Educator Preparation Programs and the Performance Assessment of Teachers, Administrators, and Other Educators

The Department will develop professional development systems for the implementation of:

(a) performance-based standards and assessment for teachers/administrators

(b) performance-based standards and assessment for teacher/administrator preparation programs

(c) performance-based assessment of teachers/administrators at the provisional, standard, and national certification levels

(d) provisional teacher education programs not operated by institutions of higher education

(e) programs for teachers holding provisional and provisional with advanced standing certificates

(f) a recognition program for distinguished teachers and administrators in the state

Rationale

Educators and the public need to become familiar with the performance-based standards for teachers and administrators which are a driving force behind education reform. Proposed standards were developed by stakeholder representatives and, following provisional approval by the Board of Education, were disseminated to school districts and educators in the Spring for public comment. Final regulations are scheduled for approval in the Summer, 1995. Districts will have the opportunity to review and adapt these standards as appropriate to the needs and interests of their communities and to integrate them into collective bargaining agreements.

Activities for the Department

A. Performance-Based Standards/Assessments for Teachers and Administrators

5.1 Publicize and provide technical assistance to administrators, teachers, and other educators on the implementation of the new educator evaluation regulations, Principles of Effective Teaching and Effective Educational Leadership, and authentic assessment.

5.2 Implement a training plan on standards for principals, other administrators, and teacher association representatives on the new evaluation regulations and Principles. Link to Institute offerings (1.2, 1.6, 1.8).

5.3 Encourage Professional Development Providers to offer professional development programs on teacher and administrator evaluation regulations, Principles and on assessment.

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Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their educator preparation programs and performance assessment standards, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Provide informational sessions for teachers, administrators, school committee members, school councils, parents, and others on the goals and uses of the new performance-based standards.
- Align training on professional performance standards with Curriculum Frameworks and student learning standards.
- Convene a study group of teachers, administrators, school committee members, school council members, and others to review the Principles of Effective Teaching and Effective Educational Leadership and suggest modifications that

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Activities

Promote the inclusion of these topics in (a) integrated models of professional development (1.1); (b) collaborative professional development experiences (4.1); (c) network programs for the professional development of teachers and administrators (2.0); (d) and other relevant settings.

5.4 Create a written model for professional development that provides a range of recommended learning experiences for teachers and administrators seeking standard Massachusetts and national certification.

B. Performance-Based Standards/Assessments for Teacher Administrator Preparation Programs

5.5 Develop with representatives from institutions of higher education, the Higher Education Coordinating Council, the Executive Office of Education, and school districts a multi-year plan of professional development for higher education faculty and administrators that is based on the creation of a performance-based certification system and authentic assessments of performance.

C. Performance-Based Assessment of Teachers/Administrators at the Provisional, Standard, and National Certification Levels

5.6 Convene a representative group of professionals from higher education, K-12 schools, and educational associations to analyze authentic performance-based assessment approaches that are used in other states and recommended by national organizations. Recommend to the Department an approach for Massachusetts that adopts or adapts existing programs or creates a new system that responds to the State's standards for educators' professional performance.

D. Provisional Teacher Education Programs Not Operated by Institutions of Higher Education

5.7 Create a written training model for school districts, private schools and others to use in designing and implementing teacher education programs for provisional teachers.

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Strategies

the district may want to adopt to ensure standards are tied to the district's challenging content standards and student performance standards.

- Identify ways to link professional performance standards with professional development standards.
- Provide or coordinate district training and technical assistance for administrators and teachers on the implementation of performance standards.
- Draw on state and national models and resource publications for the development of district programs for provisional teachers.

Activities

Include (a) seminars and practical experiences; (b) on-the-job supervision for new teachers; and (c) continuing supervision and evaluation that provides professional development for new and experienced teachers.

5.8 Provide training and support to professionals who are implementing the training of provisional teachers in state-approved alternative teacher education programs through regional delivery structures for the professional development of teachers and administrators (2.0).

E. Provisional and Provisional With Advanced Standing Certificate Programs

5.9 Create a written model for a professional development program for districts seeking to hire teachers with provisional and provisional with advanced standing certificates that include (a) on-the-job supervision; and (b) continuing supervision and evaluation.

5.10 Provide training and support to professional support team members and mentors who are implementing programs for teachers who have been hired with provisional and provisional with advanced standing certificates.

F. Teacher/Administrator Recognition Programs

5.11 Convene a working group to research and develop exemplary programs that recognize distinguished teachers and administrators. Provide opportunities for distinguished teachers and administrators to work with their peers and lead state sponsored events.

OBJECTIVE 6.0 – Maintain and Enhance Professional Development Provider and Recertification Systems

The Department will support and strengthen the Professional Development Provider and Recertification Systems.

Rationale

Educators are expressing a strong desire for information and technical assistance on the new recertification requirements. Key to the quality of educators' recertification activity are the Professional Development Providers who have been approved to offer activity that is eligible for Professional Development Points and who will become the foundation of a statewide infrastructure for professional development. The Department needs to provide technical assistance and training on the professional development standards for which Providers will be held accountable during the second cycle of approvals that begins in June, 1996.

Activities for the Department

6.1 Promote measurable standards for high quality professional development programs (3.0); prepare Providers to meet high standards for professional development activity.

6.2 Develop advisories, a videotape, and training opportunities that can help Professional Development Providers infuse quality standards into their programs and other activity.

6.3 Publish and disseminate a comprehensive catalog (hard copy and electronic) of Professional Development Providers that enables districts to access professional development resources which support the priorities for implementing education reform.

6.4 Award grants to Professional Development Providers to design and implement priority no-cost professional development programs in areas of the state where such activity is lacking.

6.5 Continue to implement administrative and informational functions related to the Recertification System. Provide technical assistance workshops, sponsor informational events, and disseminate related materials.

6.6 Audit educators' recertification activity and Professional Development Providers' offerings.

Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Review the district's professional development offerings to ensure that they are meeting quality standards for delivery and have a positive impact on improving student learning.
- Survey district educators to determine the impact of the current professional development program on their practice and to elicit recommendations for changes.
- Develop and bring to the attention of educators a list of professional development offerings that address district and state priorities.
- Develop a system for providing consultation to educators regarding their own professional development and recertification planning.
- Assess the feasibility and value of developing regional collaborations to meet the recertification needs of educators and take implementation steps as appropriate (2.0).

OBJECTIVE 7.0 – Sponsor Research on Effective Professional Development Programs

The Department will sponsor research on the most effective approaches to professional development so that the state has a better understanding of the strategies that are improving teaching, administration, and student learning.

Rationale

In order to promote effective professional development practices, the Department of Education needs to uncover the best practices that are working in the state and infuse these approaches into every school in the state. Potential research questions could be:

- *What are the most cost-effective professional development programs that yield the greatest gains in student learning?*
- *What factors contribute to successful implementation of Curriculum Frameworks in classrooms?*
- *What elements of professional development programs account for the most positive changes in educators' practice and behavior?*

Activities for the Department

7.1 Establish a research study group on the professional development of teachers and administrators. Sponsor short- and long-term research studies.

7.2 Sponsor studies on the professional development of teachers and administrators.

7.3 Write and disseminate reports on research results. Present findings throughout Massachusetts, the New England region, and nationally. Publish studies in practitioner and scholarly journals.

Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Expand the familiarity of staff and others in the school community with the research on effective professional development practices.
- Identify the professional development approaches that are most effective in the district; share findings with others at the district, regional, and state levels.
- Seek opportunities to engage in research projects sponsored by the state and others.
- Form a partnership with Department of Education staff to engage in action research on effective professional development design and delivery.

OBJECTIVE 8.0 – Disseminate Exemplary State Practices in Professional Development

The Department will create a system for identifying exemplary programs for the professional development of teachers and administrators in Massachusetts that have shown measurable improvement in teaching, administration, and student learning. The Department will disseminate information on successful professional development practices to educators across the state.

Rationale

Educators in Massachusetts are engaged in high quality professional development practices that are having a powerful impact on educators' practice and student learning. The Department will recognize professional development programs that demonstrate merit and assist others to adapt these programs in their districts. This process will increase the likelihood that the best professional development practices and programs are being used to increase student learning.

Activities for the Department

8.1 Convene a representative working group of administrators, teachers, and others to establish a system for identifying exemplary district, state and national programs for the professional development of teachers and administrators.

8.2 Design a system to replicate effective practices. Include multiple models that demonstrate a broad range of approaches.

8.3 Field-test the system with volunteers in the district. Based on the field-test results, make appropriate changes and prepare the system for statewide use during the 1997 fiscal year.

Strategies for Districts

In developing and implementing their professional development plans, school districts may want to engage in some or all of the following strategies:

- Survey effective professional development practices in use in the district and evaluate these practices for dissemination within the district, to other districts, and to the Department of Education.
- Convene a professional development innovations team to review information on effective practices and determine their applicability to the district; take steps to adapt and implement appropriate strategies.
- Develop a team of district volunteers that coordinates the implementation of state-identified exemplary practices and provide them with the resources needed to be successful.

EVALUATION OF THE STATE PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The evaluation of the State Plan for Professional Development will determine the extent to which the goals and objectives of this plan have been achieved. A third-party evaluator will create and implement a quantitative and qualitative evaluation design. The scope of the third-party evaluator's tasks, products, and deadlines will be determined in cooperation with Department of Education administrators and broadly representative educational stakeholders.

APPENDIX A

Characteristics of High Quality Professional Development

REVISED, JUNE, 1995

(Adapted from the National Staff Development Council)

Context

- A **shared vision** for professional development within the district and the school that supports continuous improvement which is embedded in daily practice.
- Coherent, **high quality professional development plans** for districts and schools that are aligned with school, district, individual educator, and state goals.
- **Line item in district budgets** that support professional development at a significant level.
- **Time and resources** to plan, engage in, and assess professional development.
- **Supportive environments** for educators to acquire, practice, and experiment with new learnings.
- **Equitable access** to opportunities for practicing, sharing, and disseminating successful practices on-the-job.
- **Collegiality and collaboration** across and within professional roles.
- Encouragement of and **support for experimentation and risk-taking.**

Process

- **Involvement of participants** in professional development design, implementation, and evaluation.
- Models that promote **multiple strategies** for professional growth that could include reflection, mentoring, guided practice, and study groups.
- **Follow-up** that focuses on the application of professional development to the improvement of student learning.
- An **ongoing evaluation process** that uses multiple sources of information, including changes in classroom/leadership practices and student learning, and has a focus on all levels of the organization.
- Understanding of **effective approaches** to professional development and their relationship to the culture of the school and district.
- **Opportunities to learn from peers** across and within educational roles.
- **Technologies** for classroom management, instruction, and professional growth.

Content

- Application of **current research,** including principles of adult learning and development and the organizational change process.
- Integration of the **Common Core of Learning, the Curriculum Frameworks, and other provisions of the Education Reform Act.**
- **Discipline-specific and interdisciplinary** approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment that incorporate high expectations for all children.
- **Developmentally appropriate** strategies for instruction and curriculum that meet the needs of **diverse student learners.**
- Strategies for reaching out to and involving **families and communities.**
- **Leadership skill training** for school administration and management.

APPENDIX B

Professional Development Bibliography

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